



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

29/01/2016

New study shows capitals of Slovenia, Estonia and Finland as top performers in separate waste collection



The European Commission presented today a study assessing the current separate collection schemes in 28 Member States, with examples of best practices. Separate collection is already a legal obligation in Europe, but improvements are needed to help speed the transition to a more circular economy. The cities topping the list for separate collection are Ljubljana (SI), Tallinn (EE) and Helsinki (FI), with collection rates as percentage of total municipal waste generation of 55,4%, 47,2% and 38,6% respectively.

Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs said: *"When these three Member States score so highly like this, it shows the importance of political will. They show that moving from old-fashioned disposal to more intelligent waste treatment can happen relatively quickly, with no need for a lengthy period of adaptation. All EU Member States can embrace the circular economy approach in their waste policies, and this study shows them how to do it."*

Good waste management is a vital element in setting the economy on a path of sustainability, together with sustainable product policy. Separate waste collection plays a key role in this transition, as it increases recycling rates, minimises the amount of waste that is sent for disposal, and moves Europe closer to zero waste. By doing this, it can also cut CO₂ emissions and save virgin resources.

The [Commission's study](#), the findings of which were presented at a conference on 29 January in Brussels, is part of a broader compliance promotion initiative to deepen practical cooperation and dissemination of best practice in Europe through intensified dialogue.

Background

Today in EU-28 capitals an average of only 19% of generated municipal waste is collected separately, with 80% of the waste still ending up in the residual waste bin. Much of this waste cannot be recycled, as it is contaminated during the collection process, resulting in a huge loss of valuable raw materials.

Separate collection of glass, paper, metal and plastic was made obligatory by 2015 in the European Union. With the new [circular economy package](#) adopted by the Commission in December 2015, separate collection takes on even greater importance. The proposals include more ambitious recycling targets for municipal waste and packaging waste, with a landfill ban for separately collected paper, metal, glass, plastics and – the new element – bio-waste.